William L. Green 2127 Lost Horse Trail Hamilton, Montana 59840 406-375-2550

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HII DE 2007

July 1, 2007 Chuck Oliver, District Ranger Darby Ranger District

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Ravalli County Commissioners				

Dear Mr. Oliver,

I am writing in regards to the rock quarry proposal put forth by the Ravalli County Road and Bridge Department.

The guiding principle of the National Forest is to provide recreation, serenity, and beauty for ALL the people. It is a magical escape for most people caught up in the dull toils of work and congested living. The Ravalli County Road and Bridge Department has obviously lost sight of the vision of our forefathers. They propose to remove up to 200,000 cubic yards of crushed stone from the pristine Lost Horse Creek canyon. They propose to complete this project from mid October through Mid April over ten years. They will be using trucks with pup trailers (78,000 GVW) carrying 17 cubic yards of stone (one cubic yard weighs 3,000 pounds). These loaded trucks each weighing 129,000 pounds will make 1,176 one way trips each year for ten years. WOW!

The quarry is located approximately 4.5 miles from highway #93 traveling along Lost Horse Road, of which, 2.1 miles is a gravel road. During the winter months this road is either a sheet of ice or a mine field of weather eroded potholes. In the past, the maintenance of this forest service owned road has been dismal at best. The road is narrow with tight blind curves. Frequently, two cars can't pass safely at the same time. All winter, people use Lost Horse Road to access the Lost Horse Canyon area for their recreational activities. The Darby school bus picks up and drops off children twice a day. If your proposal is approved, your 129,000 pound trucks will be competing with all the people mentioned above. To say the adverse impact on the SAFETY of these adults and children is enormous would be an understatement.

The noise and dust pollution will adversely affect the WILD LIFE in this area. The last time the quarry was operational; there were only 9 homes on or near Lost Horse Road. Now there are approximately 75 homes. All of these homes may have slightly impacted the movement of wild life, but at least it wasn't a commercial venture on forest service land that was affecting their migration patterns with noise and activity. The sounds from rocks being crushed and heavy equipment will only drive the wild life deeper into the forest.

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RECREATION will be adversely affected by the quarry. The viewing of wild life and the serenity of being "with nature" will be abruptly destroyed by the activities at the quarry. The snow mobilers, the cross country skiers, the snow shoers, snow campers, etc will be greatly impacted. From the Lost Horse Observation point the new sights and sounds of the quarry will definitely be memorable!

I can't begin to calculate the COST of widening and probably paving the gravel section of Lost Horse Road to accommodate these trucks safely.

My real concern is that the quarry will be in operation permanently. If the proposal becomes operative, why would the Ravalli Road and Bridge Department want to close the quarry operation down after 10 years? Won't there always be a need for more stone gravel for the roads? Isn't Ravalli County one of the fastest growing counties in the state? Why only haul 20,000 pounds of gravel a year if the need becomes greater? I believe there are multiple less intrusive sites in Ravalli County for another stone quarry. Just look along highway 93.

In conclusion, I feel this proposal is illogical and dangerous. The Lost Horse Creek homeowners and the many citizens who recreate in the Lost Horse Creek canyon expect peace and beauty to prevail forever. You are responsible and accountable to insure the safety of your citizens and the protection of the national forest. I anticipate and hope that the elected commissioners of this county armed with a deeper understanding of the adversity of this proposal will unanimously reject it.

Sincerely,

William L. Green

CC: Glenda Wiles, Administrative Assistant Ravalli County Commissioners Office

Ravalli Republic

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